

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

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INFO AMEMBASSY CAPETOWN

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AMEMBASSY LUANDA

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LOURENCO MARQUES 0713

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, MZ

SUBJ: LABOR: THOUSANDS OF MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT WORKERS STRIKE

1. DESPITE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT THAT STRIKE CALLED BY CIVIL SERVANTS UNION CONSIDERED ILLEGAL AND DETRIMENTAL TO MOZAMBIQUE'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTERESTS, THOUSANDS OF CIVIL SERVANTS FAILED TO SHOW UP AT WORK ON AUGUST 20 AND 21. DR. JORGE FERRO RIBEIRO, ACTING GOVERNOR GENERAL ISSUED COMMUNIQUE AGUST 20 CONDEMNING ATTITUDE OF STRIKING WORKERS, STRESSED DESIRE TO BETTER LABOR CONDITIONS BUT LACK OF LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND FINANCIAL MEANS WITH WHICH TO DO SO, STATED STRIKE BY WORKERS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES MAY DELAY PAYMENT OF CIVIL SERVANT SALARIES, AND REFERRED TO NEED FOR GOVERNMENT TO DO ALL POSSIBLE TO PROTECT POPULATION, ALREADY DEPRIVED AND HUNGRY. FERRO RIBEIRO AT SAME TIME CREATED COMMITTEE TO BEGIN STUDY OF GOVERNMENT SALARIES AND

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JOB CLASSIFICATIONS.

2. NOTICIAS OF AUGUST 20 ALSO CARRIES "PLATFORM" WHICH "POLITICAL" COMMITTEE" OF THE ARMED FORCES IS SEEKING TO HAVE MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT ACCEPT. PLATFORM INCLUDES FOLLOWING: A) PRICE FREEZE ON ALL BASIC PRODUCTS; B) INITIATION OF EFFECTIVE PURGING OF CIVIL SERVICE PERSONNEL; C) INCREASE OF ALL CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES UNDER 5000 ESCUDOS (US\$200 PER MONTH) BY 500 ESCUDOS (US\$20); AND D) RECOMMENDATION TO NEXT MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE PRIORITY TO CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS DEMANDS. MINISTER OF INTER-TERRITORIAL COORDINATION ALMEIDA SANTOS HAS REPORTEDLY APPROVED WAGE INCREASE DEMANDED UNDER C) --INCREASE WHICH HE HAD ALREADY DECREED FOR PRIVATE SECOTR BACK IN MAY.

3. COMMENT: STRIKE BY CIVIL SERVANTS IS ILL-OMEN FOR FORTH-COMING MOZAMBIQUE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH CIVIL SERVANTS MAY EVENTUALLY UNDERSTAND PRESENT MOZAMBIQUE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE AUTHORITY TO MEET THEIR DEMANDS, THEY WILL PROBABLY NOT BE PATIENT WITH TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT INCLUDING FRELIMO MEMBERS. THIS TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT WILL INHERIT SICK ECONOMY AND BANKRUPT TREASURY (EARLIER SALARY RAISE RECENTLY GRANTED TO CIVIL SERVANTS ESTIMATED TO COST GOVERNMENT \$10 MILLION BY END OF YEAR) AND IS UNLIKELY TO BE IN POSITION

TO RAISE SALARIES SIGNIFICANTLY.
WALKER

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